



State of Wisconsin  
**Department of Health and Family Services**

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Jim Doyle, Governor  
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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For Immediate Release

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## **ILLNESS LINKED TO UNPASTEURIZED CHEESE CURDS**

### ***People Advised Not to Eat Raw Milk Products***

MADISON - State health officials are advising individuals to avoid eating unpasteurized cheese curds produced by Wesley Lindquist of Highbridge, Wisconsin. More than 40 people have exhibited symptoms of nausea, diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever and occasionally vomiting after eating the white cheese curds produced by Lindquist.

People began getting sick between May 24 – June 2, 2006. Stool samples from six of the ill individuals were tested at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and the presence of *Campylobacter jejuni* was confirmed in all six specimens. The strains of *Campylobacter jejuni* detected in the human stool, the cheese curds, and the raw milk used to produce the curds, were matched by DNA testing and case investigations.

*Campylobacter jejuni* bacteria causes nausea, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever and vomiting. On rare occasions, the bacteria can cause more severe complications such as temporary arthritis or paralysis, generally after the initial symptoms have disappeared.

Anyone who has exhibited these symptoms and has recently consumed unpasteurized milk or dairy products should contact their health care provider. Your doctor should collect a stool sample before giving you any antibiotics to ensure the *Campylobacter* strain is not resistant to antibiotics.

To prevent spreading *Campylobacter* bacteria, follow proper hand washing procedures and wash down surfaces with an antibacterial agent. The bacteria can be shed in your stool for up to seven weeks, so following the proper hand washing and disinfecting procedures is extremely important.

Selling or distributing raw milk and raw milk products is illegal in Wisconsin. Lindquist has been ordered to stop production of the cheese curds, as well as all dairy manufacturing activity.

Anyone who has cheese curds produced by Lindquist – which are distributed in unlabeled clear baggies – should contact the Ashland Health Department so further testing can be done on the dairy product. The Ashland County Health Department is continuing to interview individuals who have gotten sick, as well as collecting specimens of both cheese curds and stool samples.

The Ashland County Health and Human Services Department, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (Division of Public Health), and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (Division of Food Safety) are collaborating in this ongoing investigation.

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